

SI Test-pits at Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge, Scottish Borders: Watching Brief Data Structure Report

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SI Test-pits at Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge Watching Brief Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Scottish Water
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NT 1288 4595 to NT 1264 4521
AOC Project No:	21793
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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of 17 test pits at Blyth Bridge, Scottish Borders.

The upgrading of the Talla Aquaduct required the excavation of 20 test-pits as part of the preliminary ground investigation works. An archaeological watching brief was conducted on all ground breaking works associated with 17 of these test-pits.

Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 An archaeological Watching Brief was required by Scottish Water during ground investigation works ahead of construction works for the Tarth Siphon pipeline at Blyth Bridge, Scottish Borders (Figure 1). The development area lies within the administrative jurisdiction of Scottish Borders Council, who are advised on archaeological matters by Dr Christopher Bowles, Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer. The archaeological works are required and are in accordance with planning policies in respect to archaeology as set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) and *Planning & Archaeology* (2011).

1.2 Archaeological Background

1.2.1 An upgrade of the Talla Aquaduct required a series of twenty preliminary Site Investigation test-pits excavated along the western side of Blyth Bank. These works at Tarth Siphons will come close to some highly significant archaeological sites and as such Dr. Bowles of Borders Council requested that eighteen of the twenty test-pits be subject to archaeological monitoring during their excavation. The remaining two test-pits lay within ground previously disturbed by the existing pipeline.

1.2.2 To the west of the village of Kirkud the southern end of the new pipeline runs close to two important sites, firstly Castlecraig Temporary Roman Camp (NMRS: NT14SW 46) whilst a little further to the north lies the Scheduled Ancient Monument, West Mains Enclosure (SAM No.3256). Further to the west lies another large probable prehistoric enclosure at Netherurd (NMRS: NT14SW 93). To the north of the pipeline where it passes Blyth Bank the route of the pipeline takes it within 250 m of Blyth Hill Camp, another Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No.2990).

1.2.3 Given this density of prehistoric enclosures and the Roman temporary camp in the local area there was a significant possibility of discrete artefact finds as well as the possibility of *in situ* archaeological features being disturbed by the ground investigation works.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the Watching Brief were:

- i) to safeguard the archaeological resource from any adverse impacts created by ground investigation works;
- ii) to liaise with Scottish Borders Council and the client, in the event of significant archaeological features and/or small finds being unearthed, as to the most appropriate response in safeguarding these features either by preservation *in situ*, if at all feasible, or by archaeological recording.
- iii) to report on the results of the Watching Brief.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The works involved an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of 17 test-pits. Excavation was conducted by a JCB 3CX utilising a smooth-bladed bucket. All ground breaking works were monitored by an experienced field archaeologist.

- 3.2 All recording was carried out according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard practices. A black and white print and digital photographic record of the archaeological works was taken (Appendix 1).

4 RESULTS

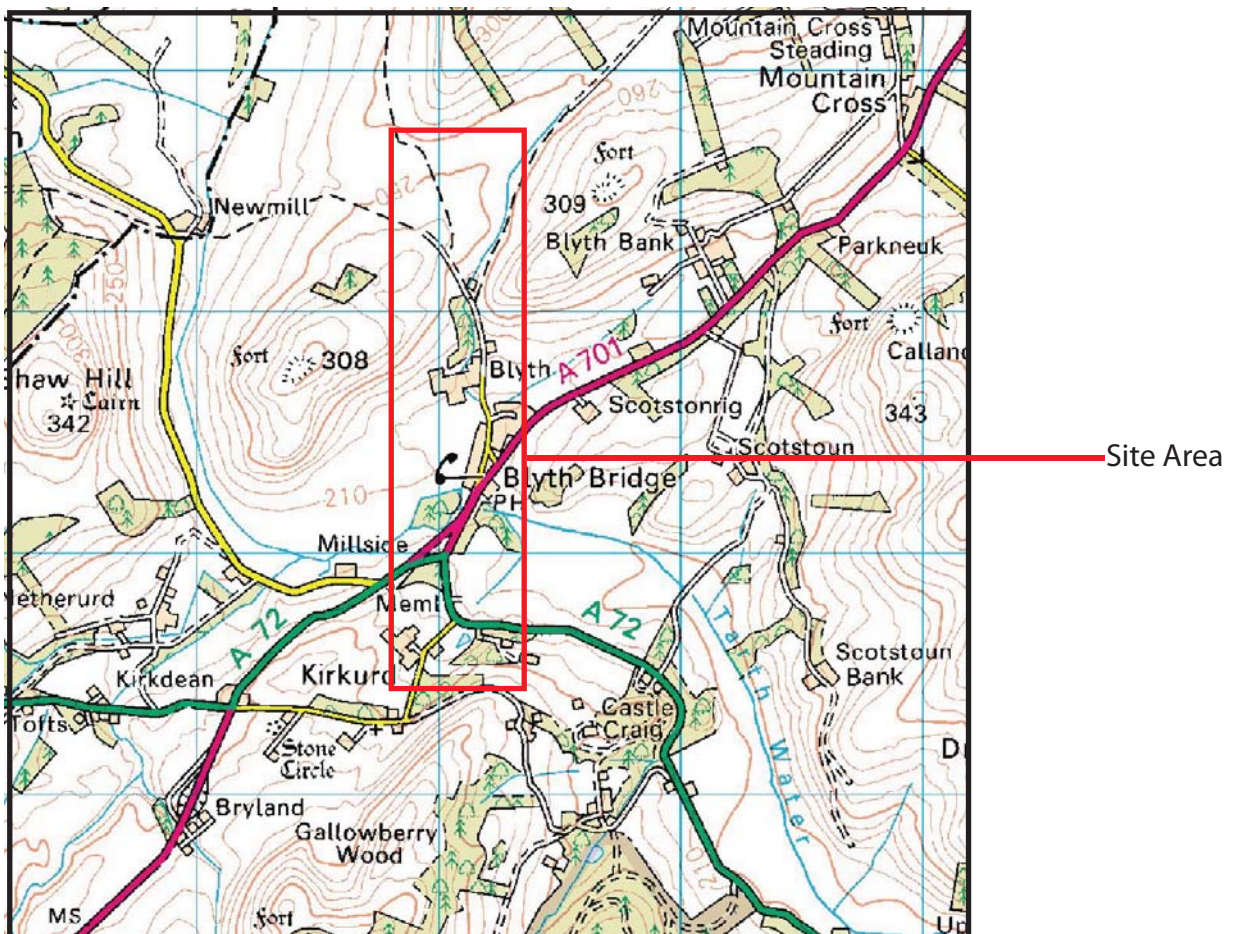
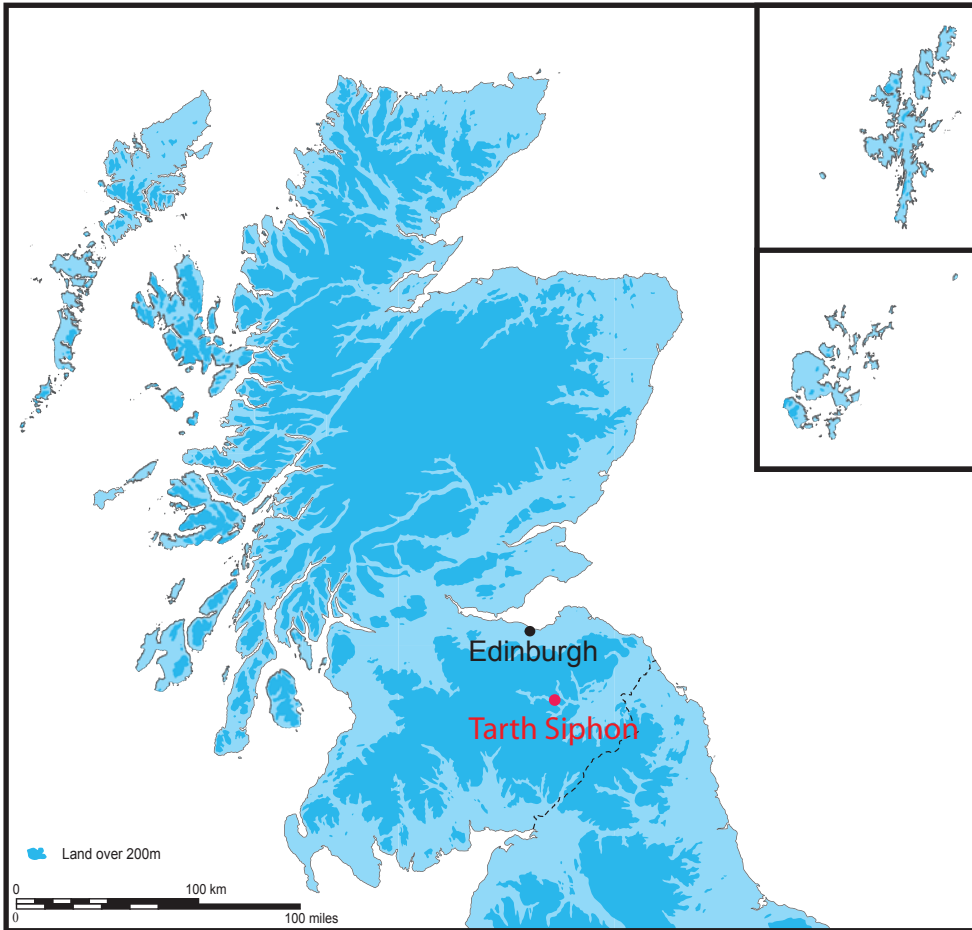
- 4.1 The ground investigation works required the excavation of 20 test-pits approximately 2.0 m by 2.0 m and up to 0.5 m in depth. Two of the test-pits were known to have been located within previously disturbed ground (TP1 and TP17) and were not monitored (Figure 2). Test-pit 16 was not excavated. Weather conditions varied during the watching brief however archaeological visibility was nevertheless good throughout the watching brief.
- 4.2 The topsoil across the watching brief area was a well sorted dark brown ploughsoil varying from 0.2 m to 0.6 m in depth across the watching brief area. Natural subsoil across the excavation generally consisted of a mid-brown sandy subsoil with infrequent stone inclusions. A full list of test pit descriptions is included as Appendix 2.
- 4.3 No archaeological material was observed in any of the test-pits.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Neither significant features nor unstratified artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

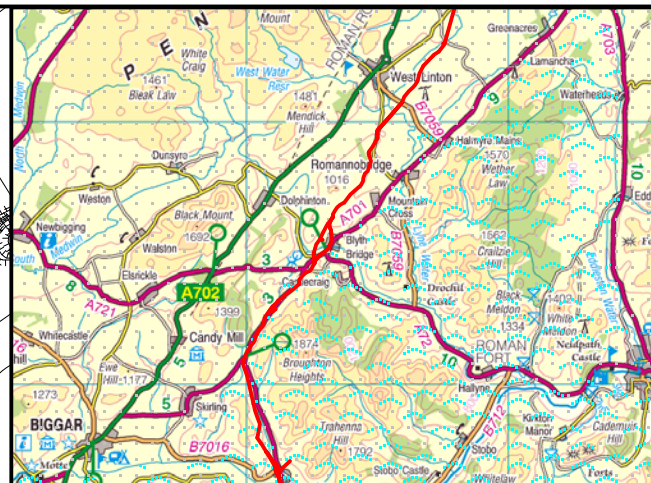
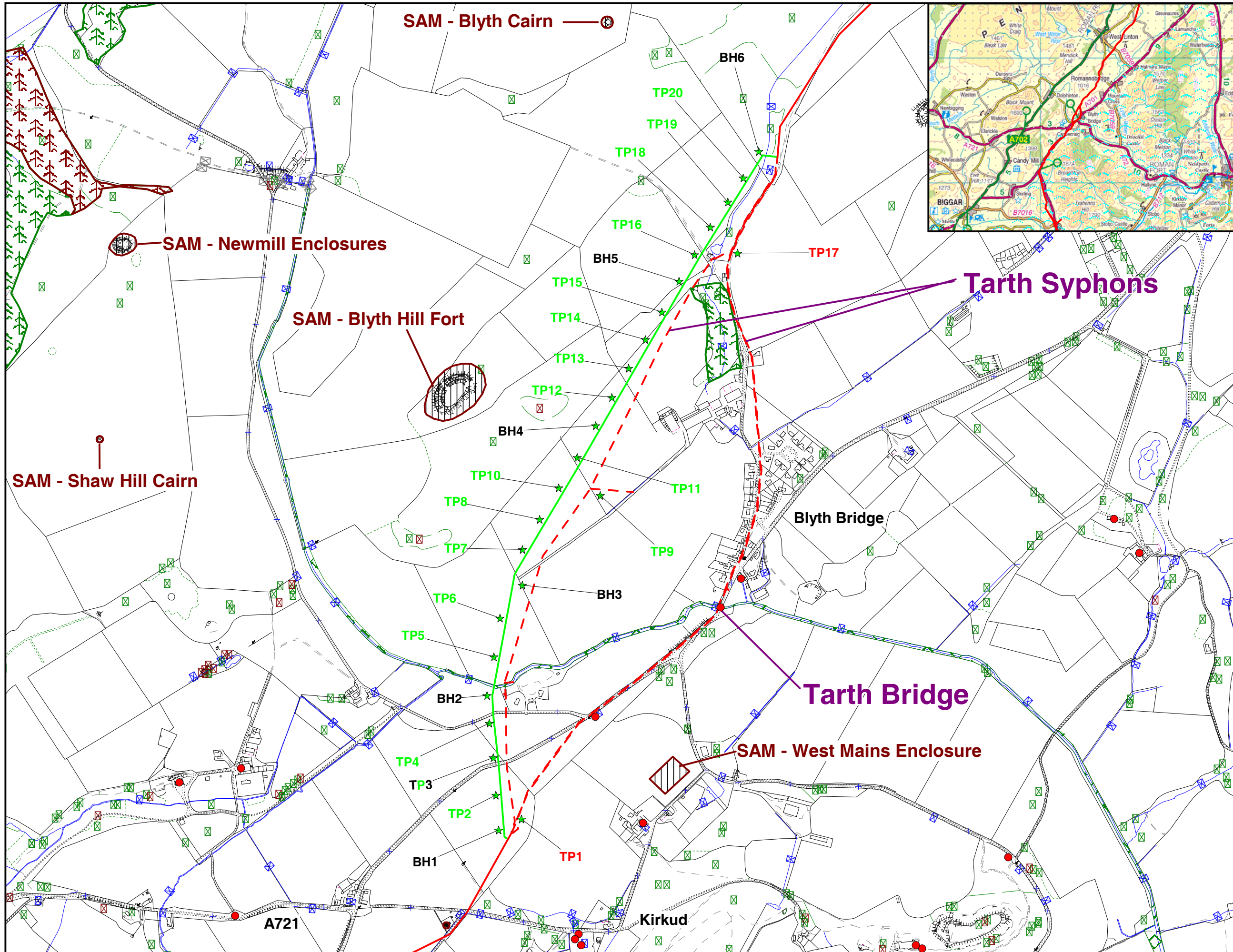
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

AOC 2011 *Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge, Scottish Borders: Written Scheme of Investigation (6th December 2010)*. Unpublished AOC Method Statement.



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Figure 1: Location of the site at Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge



- Talla Aqueduct
- - - Talla Syphons
- Proposed Syphons
- Listed Building
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Ancient Woodland
- Salmonid Waters
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Semi Natural Ancient Woodland
- ★ Ground Investigations (Trial Pits & Bore Holes)
- TP12 Monitored Test Pit
- TP1 Un-monitored Test Pit

Based on a drawing supplied by the client



Figure 2: Location of monitored test pits at Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge

SI Test-pits at Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge: Watching Brief Report

Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Record

Digital Film 1

Frame	Description
1	Registration shot
2	Test Pit 2 – Post Excavation
3	Test Pit 3 – Post Excavation
4	Test Pit 4 – Post Excavation
5	Test Pit 5 – Post Excavation
6	Test Pit 6 – Post Excavation
7	Test Pit 7 – Post Excavation
8	Test Pit 8 – Post Excavation
9	Test Pit 10 – Post Excavation
10	Test Pit 9 – Post Excavation
11	Test Pit 11 – Post Excavation
12	Test Pit 12 – Post Excavation
13	Test Pit 13 – Post Excavation
14	Test Pit 14 – Post Excavation
15	Test Pit 15 – Post Excavation
16	Test Pit 16 – Post Excavation
17	Test Pit 18 – Post Excavation
18	Test Pit 19 – Post Excavation
19	Test Pit 20 – Post Excavation

Print Film 1

Frame	Description
1	Registration shot
2	Test Pit 2 – Post Excavation
3	Test Pit 3 – Post Excavation
4	Test Pit 6 – Post Excavation
5	Test Pit 7 – Post Excavation
6	Test Pit 9 – Post Excavation
7	Test Pit 11 – Post Excavation
8	Test Pit 13 – Post Excavation
9	Test Pit 14 – Post Excavation
10	Test Pit 18 – Post Excavation
11	Test Pit 19 – Post Excavation
12	Test Pit 20 – Post Excavation

APPENDIX 2: Test Pit Descriptions

Test Pit 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.3 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted orange-brown sandy subsoil with frequent small stone inclusions
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 3

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.35 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Well compacted dark brown sand
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 4

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.3 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Well compacted mid brown sand
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 5

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.25 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted orange-brown sandy gravel
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 6

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.55 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted orange-brown sandy gravel
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 7

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.55 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Well compacted pale grey sand
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 8

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.35 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 9

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.3 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 10

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.2 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 11

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.6 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 12

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.6 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 13

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.4 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 14

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.5 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 15

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.6 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 18

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.5 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 19

<i>Dimensions</i>	2.0 m x 0.5 m
<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	0.55 m
<i>Subsoil</i>	Well compacted mid-brown sand
<i>Features</i>	None
<i>Artefacts</i>	None

Test Pit 20

Dimensions 2.0 m x 0.5 m

Depth of Topsoil 0.35 m

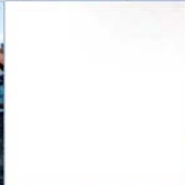
Subsoil Moderately compacted mid-brown sandy subsoil

Features None

Artefacts None

APPENDIX 3: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Scottish Borders Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Watching Brief on SI Test-pitting at Tarth Siphon, Blyth Bridge, Scottish Borders
PROJECT CODE:	AOC21793
PARISH:	Newlands
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Andrew Sibley
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S)	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 1288 4595 to NT 1264 4521
START DATE (this season)	29 th September 2011
END DATE (this season)	4 th October 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN DESCRIPTION: (NARRATIVE) (May include information from other fields)	<p>The upgrading of the Talla Aquaduct required the excavation of 20 SI test-pits as part of the preliminary ground investigation works. An archaeological watching brief was conducted on all ground breaking works associated with 17 of these test pits.</p> <p>Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/a
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EMAIL ADDRESS:	admin@aocarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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